ECLIPSE COMICS™

mini-series

№ 4 of 4

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VILLAINS AND VIGILANTES

NGER

TM

JEFF -DEE- 1986 R3

The PENUMBRA

WRITE TO: ECLIPSE COMICS - P.O. BOX 1099 - FORESTVILLE - CALIFORNIA - 95436

ON THE RACKS

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Greyan invites Boronwe to join the Daughters of Death. Picks up where the Epic series left off!

PINK SKY: It's still too dark to see the keyboard, but since i can check myself on the green glowing screen, i don't need to turn the lights on. The sun will be up soon enough. Around me, outside, the sky is that peculiar pinkish orange of clear dawn. It has that "dawn effect" i like to see Steve Oliff or Sam Parsons colour with an airbrush.

No, i haven't been up all night drinking coffee and feeling like the star of a 1930s movie about newspapermen. In fact, i left the office early last night, and i did it in full knowledge that i was blowing my deadline for the July Penumbra, which was supposed to be on Sean's desk by nine o'clock this morning. I didn't give a fig; i went home and read a book by Irwin S. Cobb. Slept well too, the sleep of the irresponsible and the damned.

But here i am, and it's not even light yet.

I dunno. I just woke up. Next thing i knew i'd put on my flannel housecoat and walked over to the office. I think it's about five thirty. Dean is still asleep, and i ought to get back before he rolls over and misses me. But the birds are singing so nicely, and it's cool now after yesterday's heat. And i am supposed to be a writer, and the typesetter will need this as soon as she gets into her office this morning.

Sure is pretty outside. The window is wide open and i can look away to the east, to where the sun will come up behind the trees. It happens every day, but that's no reason someone shouldn't mention it in print.

I don't suppose you read these pages to learn about the daily habits of the sun, but, well, the sorry truth is that i haven't got much else on my mind at the present. No thunderous orations about the future of comics are bursting from my brain right at this time. It's too quiet and still out there for a hard sell pitch about how great our books are, although i surely hope you will buy dozens of them this month. And even though it's getting lighter now, i don't think i shall dig out any more lists of readers' names and occupations to print. Nope.

Today i am a transparent sky watcher, a leaf awaiting photosynthesis, a bird among the birds of the garden. I am not human yet, i have not a lot to say.

The sky is turning yellow and a robin is singing very loudly behind the house. The blue jays are at it too, and the neighbor's rooster. Early traffic on Covey Road sounds like distant hissing steam. Today is Wednesday, and the friendly Basque man who owns Sunrise Salvage will be along within the hour to empty the garbage cans down at the foot of the driveway.

And now the dawn has reached the bleached out moment; the colour is utterly gone from the sky. In the east all is white, a cool breeze eases through the open window and the trees turn from dark grey to somber green. As of this minute i can say i "just got up early" rather than that i am "running around in the middle of the night in my housecoat."

Not that anyone's here to ask me, mind you, but just in case they did.

And there's the sun. It's morning. A crow is cawing in the old walnut tree. I've filled my page with type and I can go back to the house, brush my teeth and put on my clothes. Won't Sean be surprised when he comes in at nine and sees this on his desk!? He thought i'd blown my deadline.

Holy hell—the phone's ringing! Six o'clock in the a.m. and the phone's ringing in the office. Let's see who's there...

Why, it's Paul McSpadden from the Dallas Fantasy Fair! Hi, Paul! No, you didn't wake me—i've been up for hours!

catherine yronwode

VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™ no. 4, July 1987. Published monthly by Eclipse Comics, P.O. Box 1099, Forestville, CA 95436. Sean Deming, Editor. Catherine Yronwode, Editor-in-Chief. Dean Mullaney, Publisher. Story ©1987 Jack Herman. Art ©1987 Jeff Dee/Pat Zircher. Villains & Vigilantes TM Fantasy Games, Inc. All other material ©1987 Eclipse Enterprises, Inc. Film by SM Graphics. For licensing information contact Dean Mullaney.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA. HOME OF THE HOOSIER DOME, THE 500, AND THE INDIANAPOLIS COLTS...

JACK HERMAN JEFF DEE
WRITER / CO-PLOTTERS / PENCILLER

PAT "Z-MAN" ZIRCHER INKER
KURT HATHAWAY LETTERER
MARCUS DAVID COLORIST
SEAN DEMING EDITOR
CAT ⊕ YRONWODE ED.-IN-CHIEF

...THE HARMON INSURANCE BUILDING, WHERE HIGH ATOP RESIDES THE CRUSADER CITADEL, HEADQUARTERS OF THE SUPER-HEROIC CRUSADERS.

DETECTIVE BROYKO AND THE TACTICAL CRIMINAL SQUAD. ROOFTOP ABOVE THE HOLY FOOK RESTAURANT. 11:55 p.m.

WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE, SIR?

DAMNED IF I KNOW! THE CRUSADERS WENT IN WITH SOME KIND OF PLAN, AND WHATEVER IT WAS, IT MUST'VE FAILED!

I PROMISED MANTA-MAN I'D GIVE HIM TIME TO PULL THIS OFF. AND UNTIL THAT TIME'S UP, WE GOTTA WAIT IT OUT. HE'S NEVER LET US DOWN BEFORE!

INSIDE THE CITADEL...

...SO, BULL, YOU SEE IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU AND MACE LEAVE RIGHT NOW TO, UM... GO GUARD MOUNT RUSHMORE!

WHY?

BECAUSE WE'RE, UM... WE'RE GOING TO GO STEAL IT!

OKAY.

GOODBYE! GOOD LUCK! ADIOS! SAYONARA! HASTA LA VISTA! HAPPY TRAILS!

TWO LESS WAYS TO SPLIT THE MONEY!

IF WE DON'T DO *SOMETHING* THIS IS GOING TO BE *VERY UGLY*. WE'VE GOT TO GET THESE DAMN *POWER DAMPENERS* OFF!

OH, GOD! I *NEVER* SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT THOSE TWO IN ON THIS.

SHUTTLE TUBE 11:51 PM

EVERGREEN, CAN YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH THE *PLANTS* UP IN YOUR QUARTERS?

NO. THEY MUST'VE BEEN *MOVED*. OR *DESTROYED*.

TIME TO LAU
00:04:21

HOW ABOUT *YOU*? ANY LUCK GETTING THAT HAND FREE?

NOPE.

HAS ANYBODY ELSE NOTICED HOW MUCH THAT *CONDOR* GUY'S COSTUME LOOKS LIKE THE *FREEDOM EAGLE'S*?

YES, I HAVE. I ONLY WISH THAT *FREEDOM EAGLE* WERE STILL *ALIVE*.' *HE* COULD GET US OUT OF THIS.'

EVERGREEN COMES WITH US. MARIONETTE SAID I DIDN'T HAVE TO TAKE PART IN ANY OPERATION THAT WOULD ENDANGER HER LIFE. SHE SAID I COULD HAVE HER.!

THIS END UP
EXPLOSIVES
CAUTION

GEE, THAT'S TOO BAD! MARIONETTE'S IN DEEPSLEEP AND IN NO POSITION TO HAVE A SAY ABOUT ANYTHING. MOCKER'S IN CHARGE NOW.

YOU'RE LYING! I JUST CAME FROM THE MED-LAB AND SHE'S NOT THERE! AND I DON'T CARE WHAT MOCKER SAYS! NO ONE HURTS EVERGREEN!

GET YOUR MIND OFF MISS BOTANY 1983 AND START THINKIN' ABOUT THE MONEY WE'LL HAVE ONCE WE REPROGRAM STATCOM. I'LL EVEN BUY YOU A GREENHOUSE FULL OF POTTED PALMS, IF THAT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY.!

I WILL *NOT* LET YOU *HURT* EVERGREEN!

HEY, THAT'S NOT THE *SMARTEST* THING TO DO WITH ALL THESE *EXPLOSIVES* AROUND!

ZZZAK!

WUMF!

SLAM!

OOF-!

IT'S JUST *ONE LESS WAY* WE HAVE TO *SPLIT* THE *MONEY*!

YOU HAD A *CHOICE*, YOU STUPID IDIOT. NOW YOU CAN *DIE* HERE WITH THE KIDDIE COPS AND CRUSADERS, THAT BOSSY MARIONETTE *AND* YOUR PRECIOUS EVERGREEN!

SET

ANY OTHER IDEAS?

...PERHAPS IF WE COULD BOTH GET OUR OUTER HANDS FREE, I COULD SHIELD YOU WITH MY INVULNERABLE BODY AND...

NO. THAT WON'T WORK, EITHER!

OKAY. DO YOU SEE THE TOP TOOLPOUCH THERE ON MY RIGHT LEG?

YEAH.

THAT CONTAINS MY LOCKPICK SET. DO YOU THINK YOU COULD GRAB IT AND PULL IT OFF WITH YOUR FEET?

WAIT A SECOND...

IT'S COMING RIGHT OFF.

VELCRO.

VERY NICE!

OKAY, THAT'S AS FAR AS MY PLAN GOES. WHAT DO WE DO WITH IT?

NOW THE WAY THIS IS GOING TO WORK IS: I'M GOING TO TRY AND PITCH THIS OVER TO YOUR RIGHT HAND AND YOU'RE GOING TO CATCH IT. GOT THAT?

SIMPLE.

OW!

OKAY. THE *NEXT* TOOLPOUCH ON THAT SIDE IS MY *WRENCH AND SOCKET SET.* LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO WITH THAT.

NOW, PULL! THE CENTRAL PROCESSING CORTEX IS ALMOST LOOSE!

URG!

PHILISTINES! BARBARIANS! SCUMBAGS! YOU... ZARKZNIFF! ... MONGOLOID, HE WAS A MONGOLOID... HAPPIER THAN YOU AND ME! MONGOLOID, HE WAS...

SHUT UP!

KTOW KTOW KTOW

LET'S GO!

NICE TOSS.

TIME TO LAUNCH 00:03:03

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE THE ONLY ONES THAT MADE THE TRIP, MERC.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. LIFE IS HARD.

TIME TO LAUNCH 00:03:02

TO SHUTTLE

SAFETY

TIME TO LAUNCH 00:03:00

THIS WHOLE *PLACE* MUST BE WIRED TO *EXPLODE* BY NOW. I'VE GOT TO *SAVE* *EVERGREEN.*

I SHOULD *NEVER'VE* RE-UPPED IN THE *CRUSHERS.* SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT I COULD *NEVER* FORCE EVERGREEN TO *LOVE* ME.

EVERGREEN! CAN YOU *HEAR* ME?!

PROJECTION ROOM

THUMP!

THUMP!

FIRE

IT'S *LOCKED* AND *TOO THICK* TO BLAST THROUGH.

FIRE

KRESH!

I *LOVE* YOU, EVERGREEN. AND IF I *MUST* I WILL *PAY* FOR MY *BETRAYAL* OF YOU WITH MY *BLOOD!* *ACID* BLOOD TO *BURN* THROUGH THIS DOOR SO THAT I MAY FREE YOU.

I'VE COME TO *RESCUE* YOU, DARLING. THE CITADEL HAS BEEN RIGGED TO *EXPLODE*. THERE ISN'T MUCH *TIME*.

I'M NOT GOING WITH YOU *ALONE*, MY LOVE. IF YOU WANT TO *FREE* ME, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO *FREE* US *ALL*.

THERE'S *NO TIME* TO ARGUE. I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT I *CANNOT* DISSUADE YOU.

THAT'S IT... YOU'VE ALMOST GOT ANOTHER ONE.

TUBE 11:58 PM.

CONDOR'S ALMOST WORKED HIMSELF *FREE!*

THAT'S *ENOUGH*, SHOCKER. I CAN *TAKE IT* FROM HERE.

KRRNK!

OKAY, WE'RE FREE! LET'S SCRAMBLE!

SHUTTLE TUBE 11:59

BLIZZARD AND DREAMWEAVER ARE STILL IN THEIR SLEEP TUBES. WE'VE GOT TO GET THEM TO THE ELEVATOR.

IT'S GOING TO BE A HELL OF A RUN. WE'D BETTER SPLIT UP. I'LL GO FOR THE TUBES.

COUNT ME IN, BOSS.

I'LL SECURE THE ELEVATOR AND HELP EVERGREEN WITH HER BOYFRIEND.

THEIR LIFESIGNS LOOK A LITTLE BETTER, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL WHEN WE BRING THEM OUT.

SHLAAK!

ONCE MANTA-MAN KICKS THE ELEVATOR INTO EXPRESS MODE, WE'LL BE OUT OF HERE IN NO TIME!

LET'S JUST HOPE WE GET FAR ENOUGH OUT OF HERE, JUNIOR.

SHUTTLE TUBE 11:59

TIME TO LAUNCH 00:00:19

OKAY, WE'RE *HERE!* LET'S *HIT IT!*

HANG ON, EVERYONE. THIS IS GOING TO BE A BIT OF A *ROUGH* RIDE!

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*

GETTING READY TO GO ON A *LITTLE* TRIP. YOU *COMIN'* *WITH?*

TIME TO LAUNCH

WARNING

errg--THERE WE GO!

MOVE OVER... I NEED SOME MORE ROOM...

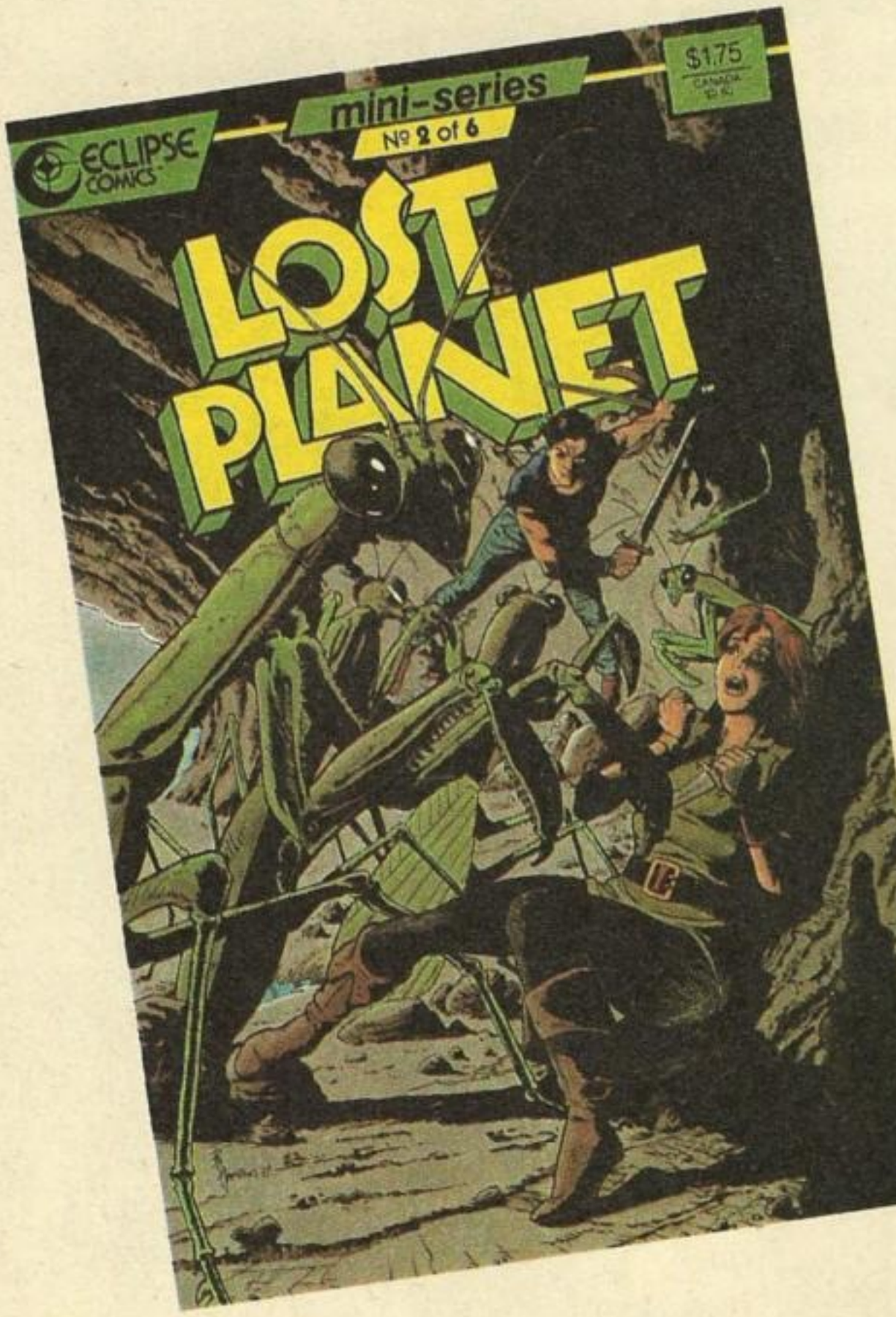
ALL SYSTEMS ARE *GO.* HANG ON TO YOUR *SHORTS.*

VROOOOM!

Do You Know Where You Are?

Bo Hampton's

LOST PLANET™



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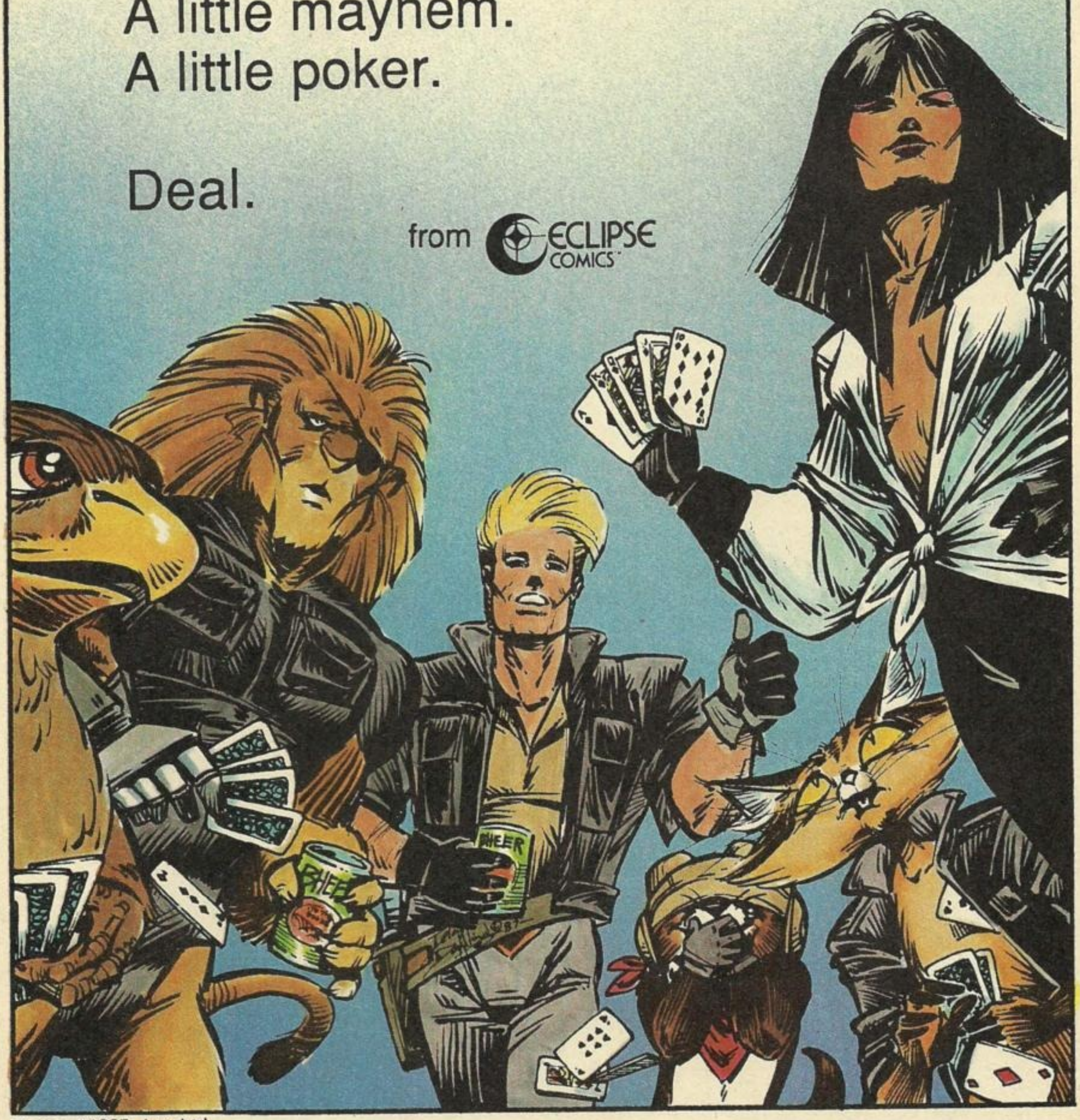
FUSION™

Meet the crew of the Tsunami.
A little luck.
A little mayhem.
A little poker.

Deal.

from ECLIPSE COMICS™



Fusion ©1987, Lex Ltd.

CRUSADERS

KEEP CLOSED AT ALL TIMES

OKAY. THE COAST IS CLEAR.

COME ON...

WATCH THE WINGS. WATCH THE WINGS!

HOLY--!

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU GUYS CAN *HEAR* ME, BUT YOU'VE *GOT* TO *GET OUT* OF THE CITADEL!

WE *RECEIVE* YOU, CONDOR. NOW LISTEN. MOCKER IS OUT TO *SABOTAGE* THE *STATCOM* SATELLITE...

NEVER MIND THAT! JUST GET OUT OF THERE.! GET...

BA-DOOM!

DO YOU THINK THEY MADE IT OUT?

I... I DON'T KNOW, MAN. IT'S A CRAPSHOOT!

CRUSADERS

CARGO ACCESS

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA!

YOU SOLID?

OH, YEAH. SURE! I'M JUST TERRIFIC.!

A.R.C. CIRCUIT

SNACK FOODS

KEEP DOWN.

I AM.

HELLO.!

SNACK FOODS

TANG

VERY NICE.!

CHOK

DENNIS, I WANT YOU TO HANG ON TO SOMETHING. I'VE JUST FOUND THE AFT REACTION CONTROL SYSTEM.!

CRUSADERS

CRUSADERS

CRUSADERS

CRUSADERS

I'VE LOST TRACK OF OUR *CO-ORDINATES!* MERC, WHERE THE *HELL* ARE WE? *MERC?!?*

THIS ONE'S JUST FOR *INSURANCE*. DON'T TRY ANYTHING *FUNNY!* YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SEE WHAT WOULD *HAPPEN* IN HERE IF THIS THING *WENT OFF!*

NEVER MIND. I *FOUND* IT! *STATCOM* IS JUST UP *AHEAD!* WE'RE GOING TO BE *FILTHY RICH!*

THAT'S *NOT STATCOM.*

HOW DO *YOU KNOW* THAT'S *NOT STATCOM?*

LOOK, I READ *OMNI MAGAZINE*, ALL RIGHT? AND I'M *TELLING* YOU, THAT'S *NOT STATCOM!*

STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND...

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AGO, HALF A DOZEN *TACTICAL CRIMINALS* ESCAPED FROM AN INDIANA PRISON. TONIGHT, THE *CRUSADER'S SPACE SHUTTLE* MAKES AN *UNAUTHORIZED TAKE-OFF*, AND THEIR *HEADQUARTERS* EXPLODES.

NOW THAT *SAME SHUTTLE* IS MAKING A *BEELINE* FOR THE *WATCHBIRD*, ONE OF OUR MOST *SENSITIVE* AND *VITAL SPY SATELLITES!*

IS IT... I MEAN, IS *HE* READY?

HE'S *ALWAYS* READY, GENERAL.

BUT HE *VIOLATES EVERY* ARMS LIMITATION TREATY EVER *CONCEIVED* OF. THINK OF HOW THE *RUSSIANS* WILL REACT!

HELL, IT JUST MIGHT BE THE *RUSSIANS* THAT'RE UP THERE *NOW*, TRYING TO PUT OUR *EYE* OUT!

THE PRESIDENT SAYS IT'S *YOUR* CALL, GENERAL!

AS IT IS, WE'RE TOO LATE TO INTERCEPT THEM BEFORE THEY REACH *WATCHBIRD*, BUT WE CAN KNOCK THEM OUT BEFORE THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH ANY VITAL DATA. DO WE LAUNCH?

I WANT A *FULL-SCALE* ALERT. TAKE US TO *DEFCON TWO*. LAUNCH THE *INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MAN*.

A WHEATFIELD OUTSIDE OF PROVO, UTAH. 1:03 A.M. CENTRAL STANDARD TIME.

RISE AND *SHINE*, JOHN!

GOOD MORNING, *DEAN*. IT'S GOOD TO BE *WORKING* WITH YOU AGAIN.

MERC, KEEP AN *EYE* ON OUR *GUESTS*. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.'

CARGO ACCESS

Uh, DENNIS, YOU DON'T HAVE A *SPACESUIT*, MAN.

MY *INVULNERABLE* BODY CAN SURVIVE THE *DECOMPRESSION*, BUT I'LL HAVE TO HOLD MY *BREATH*.'

Oh, YEAH, *RIGHT*. GOOD LUCK, OKAY?

IF THAT'S *NOT STATCOM* THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT *DAMAGE* MOCKER'S GOING TO DO BY *TAMPERING* WITH IT. I'M GOING *AFTER* HIM.

WELL, LOOKS LIKE JUST THE *TWO* OF US NOW, HUH? WHAT *WILL* WE TALK ABOUT...?

MARKING *CO-ORDINATES* FOR TARGET *NOW*, DEAN.

KEEP *GOING*, JOHN. THIS IS *NOT* A DRILL. YOU'VE GOT THE *GREEN LIGHT*.'

FUSION™
Death,
Destruction,
and Furry Animals.
What more could you ask for?
from ECLIPSE COMICS™

Tea, anyone?
THE DREAMERY™
from ECLIPSE COMICS™
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Portia Prinz™

of the Glamazons

FACES A COSMIC CRISIS

ART versus COMMERCE

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—Don Thompson
COMICS BUYERS' GUIDE

"As predicted, the pendulum of the Black-and-White Explosion has swung the other way. Many retailers aren't ordering any Black-and-Whites, regardless of merit or saleability, merely because they're convinced that they were just a fad. A lot of good material is dying, sight unseen..."

—unnamed comics sales analyst

If Your Dealer's Sold Out . . .

ASK FOR IT!!

MAKE UP YOUR *OWN* MIND!

Six Bi-Monthly Issues from ECLIPSE

SNAP!

LOCKING ON TARGET. THRUSTERS UP TO *MAXIMUM!*

IT'S YOUR SHOW, JOHN. GO GET 'EM.!

I DON'T FEEL WELL.

CARGO ACCESS

FEEL ANY BETTER NOW?

SLAM!

THUMP!

FLIGHT DECK

SOMETHING'S WRONG! THINGS ARE GOING TOO WELL!

TIME TO TARGET IS TWENTY SECONDS!

USAF

USAF

WE HAVE A CONFIRMED TACTICAL *CRIMINAL* SIGHTING, DEAN. *TEN SECONDS* TO TARGET.

SHIELDS MEETING WITH LIGHT *RESISTANCE*. CONFIRMED TARGET IS *HOSTILE*. SEVEN SECONDS TO TARGET.

GENERAL, THIS IS *MANTA-MAN* OF THE *CRUSADERS*.! WE'VE BEEN MONITORING YOUR SITUATION FROM OUR *TIME-CAPSULE* BENEATH THE *HARMON BUILDING*.!

FOR *GOD'S SAKE*, GENERAL, *CALL HIM OFF*.!!

SU BOGEY 77-4

UNIT-1 WTBS

57 SOFF MINOR

ICBM

VRD2 376 A7H

JESUS.

THERE'S *NO WAY*.! IT'S TOO LATE.

STTCM GA-P1 SJPN

NADSAT DA38 77-A1

EMERGENCY RECALL CODE VICTOR-ALPH-VICTOR-IGLOO-NAPALM-OMEGA. DO YOU READ ME? COME ON *HOME*, JOHN.! "ALL-IS-FORGIVEN.!"

WHAT *HAPPENED*? WAS THIS JUST *ANOTHER* DRILL? WERE YOU JUST *TESTING* ME, DEAN? DID I DO SOMETHING *WRONG*?

NO. IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU DID *VERY WELL!* JUST COME ON *BACK*, JOHN. WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT *LATER*.

CRUSADERS

SO... HOW WE GETTIN' *HOME*, PAL?

I'VE MANAGED TO ACTIVATE THE *RE-ENTRY* AND *LANDING* PROGRAM CYCLE, AND I'VE ESTABLISHED RADIO CONTACT WITH THE *INDIANAPOLIS AIR-PORT* AND *MISSION CONTROL, HOUSTON.*

THEY'RE GOING TO TALK US DOWN.

BUT I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR *HELP* HERE, SO GRAB YOURSELF A *HEADSET!*

AAAAAAAA!!

DAMMIT!

FLIGHT D
1 FUGH
2 HEADS
3 MANU
4 MAR

TWUNK!

SORRY I'M LATE!

SORRY I COULDN'T LET GO OF THE WHEEL TO HELP YOU.

CARGO ACCESS

INDIANAPOLIS AIRPORT. 1:23 A.M.

SKREEEEEEE

CRUSADERS

NICE TOSS, BY THE WAY.

HOW IS EVERYONE?

WE'LL LIVE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

PARDON ME IF THIS IS A STUPID QUESTION, BUT DID YOU GUYS EVER FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED?

WE WERE SET UP! SOMEHOW THE CRUSHERS DISCOVERED OUR SECRET IDENTITIES. HOLM, A PSYCHIC FROM MY DREAM RESEARCH PROGRAM, WAS MURDERED AT THE BUS STATION TONIGHT. MAYBE THERE'S SOME CONNECTION. I DON'T KNOW!

SHATTERMAN AND I ARE BOTH READY TO START TRACKING DOWN THE REST OF THE CRUSHERS IMMEDIATELY! NOW THAT WE'RE CRUSADERS, WE WANT TO DO OUR PART FOR THE TEAM.

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU LIKE THIS, BOYS, BUT THE HARMON INSURANCE COMPANY SAID THEY WON'T PAY OUR CLAIM. AND WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITADEL AND THE SHUTTLE, WE JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY IN OUR BUDGET TO TAKE ON ANY MORE MEMBERS RIGHT NOW!

BUT BELIEVE ME, IF AN OPENING EVER COMES UP, YOU TWO WILL BE THE FIRST ONES I CALL! IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL HAVE MY FRIEND, CARTER MANNING, PAY FOR YOUR OLD MOVING VAN.

INTERSTATE 65, NORTHBOUND. 6:14 A.M.

WELL, LOOKS LIKE IT'S BACK TO GRAND RAPIDS. AFTER ALL WE WENT THROUGH FOR THOSE GUYS, I THOUGHT FOR SURE WE WERE IN!

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, IT'LL LOOK GREAT ON OUR RESUME!

GOING HOME L6807 INDIANA

DARN! THAT'S THE END!

THEY SHARE A SECRET.
A TERRIBLE SECRET.
IT MEANT DEATH FOR THOUSANDS.
TO THEM IT MEANS THE POWER
OF A GOD!

ECLIPSE COMICS™

STRIKE!™

COMING THIS
SUMMER FROM
4WINDS and ECLIPSE.

STRIKE! TM and © 1987 DIXON /LYLE

VIGIL BULLETIN

THE CRUSADERS' MINI-SHUTTLE

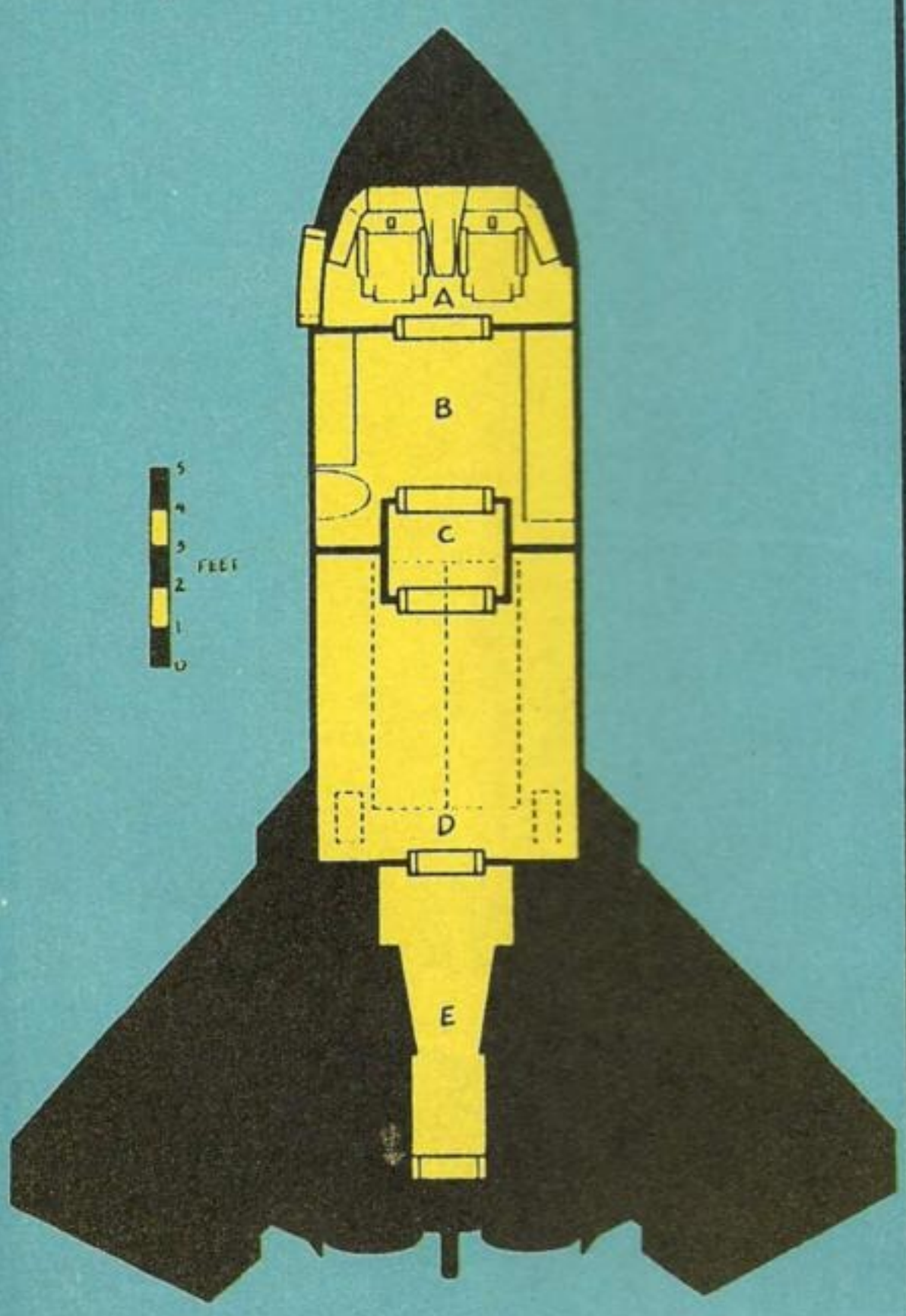
A— Flight Deck: This is the cockpit that controls the flight of the shuttle during take-offs and landings. The port station is occupied by the Commander (Manta-Man), or occasionally a mission or payload specialist. The starboard station is occupied by the pilot (both Enforcer and Blizzard are qualified). The onboard computer is programmed in advance by TEACHER before a flight and has a phase-by-phase schedule of the mission in its memory. If needed the shuttle can be flown with many of its operations overseen by the on-board computer which monitors everything, relays it back to TEACHER at the Citadel, and receives further programming from TEACHER. All communications gear is located on the Flight Deck as well.

B— Crew Compartment/Mid-Deck: Here is where the rest of the flight team (the remaining Crusaders' plus any additional passengers) are stationed during take-off. In the center of the floor is a panel that opens onto the Equipment Bay, where personal gear is stored during take-offs and landings. Along the wall above and on the sides of the hatchway to area C are more storage lockers which are utilized if additional equipment storage space is needed, or if the mission is to last for an extended period of time. These lockers can be removed from the shuttle before a mission if not needed. Behind them is the circuit board for the shuttle's electrical system, which regulates such things as lights, internal power and life support, along with external functions such as the reaction control system. In this section there is also a storage locker containing six EMUs (Extravehicular Mobility Units) or spacesuits.

C—: This is the airlock leading into area D.

D— Cargo Bay: Large equipment is stored here. There are two heavy Cargo Bay doors in the top of this compartment, which are sometimes open while out of the atmosphere, leaving this section of the shuttle depressurized. There are two windows to the extreme rear of the compartment (marked by the smaller rectangles).

E— Engine Access Crawlway: Here, crew members can get access to the three main shuttle engines, should repairs become necessary during the mission. The hatchways leading into the crawlway are usually locked at all times and can only be opened by the on-board computer.



As this is a much smaller version of the Space Shuttle used by NASA, its principle design is for short hops out of the atmosphere and short-range missions lasting only days. For instance, the clearance in the Flight Deck, the Mid-Deck and the Cargo Bay is only 7 feet. The Airlock is a narrow shaft with a maximum width of three feet. The Engine Access Crawlway is between two and four feet wide.

The shuttle has no solid rocket boosters to propel it into orbit, but its own engines have sufficient power to take the shuttle out of the atmosphere. They are "one-shot" rocket engines, essentially useless once the shuttle is in orbit. The shuttle returns to earth as a glider like the NASA space shuttle, then most of the engine's components must be replaced and the engines properly refitted. The wings and tail section of the shuttle fold back while it sits in the launch tube at Crusader Citadel.

The shuttle weighs 25 tons. It can take 250 points of damage before being disabled; 1000 points of damage before being completely destroyed. Maximum speed in atmosphere (during take-off): 2728 m.p.h. or 12000" a turn. Maximum speed during gliding descent out of the atmosphere: 16,500 m.p.h. or 72600" a turn. Maximum speed in atmosphere during gliding descent: 113 m.p.h. or 500" a turn. Maximum speed in orbit: 10,500 m.p.h. or 46200" per turn.

The Crusaders' Mini-Shuttle can hold a maximum of 2 crew members and 6 passengers, with 7000 lbs. of cargo.

The exterior Laser Turret was removed after complaints by the United Nations concerning the deployment of weapons in outer space and the banning of the shuttle from the airspace of several countries. The turret now houses a robotic space arm which has a reach of 16" when completely extended. It has a Carrying Capacity of 25 tons and a structural rating of 12. It can take 25 points of damage before being disabled and 100 points of damage before being destroyed. Currently, the arm is not in working order and there are several problems in the controls when it comes to its manipulation of smaller objects. Like the NASA shuttle, this arm was designed in Canada.

While the Crusaders' Mini-Shuttle is technically a product of Manning Electronics, many of its sub-systems were built by other corporations. Some of the other contractors involved were Lockheed, McDonnell-Douglas, Hughes Aircraft, Bell Labs, TRW, Emerson Electronics, and Varicorp.

The Crusaders' Mini-Space Shuttle is the first privately owned non-commercial spacecraft. It cost 1.2 billion dollars.

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JOHN K. SNYDER III

COMING MONTHLY FROM ECLIPSE

REALITY CHECK

P.O. BOX 1099 • FORESTVILLE • CA • 95436

Dear Jack and Jeff,

Villains & Vigilantes is one of the best comic books I have ever read. Believe me, that's quite a compliment. I own the *Villains and Vigilantes* game and several adventures (by the way, I miss Jeff's work on them, too!!). I've been playing it for years and always hoped you would make a comic book about it. Well, you finally did it and I was definitely not disappointed!

I was amazed and excited by your choice of Indianapolis for the Crusaders' headquarters. I come from Indianapolis and will be returning there soon. How do you know so much about Indianapolis? Long hours of research? Why did you choose to bestow this great honor on my hometown? (Maybe its central location?)

I've always wondered what it would be like to play in your *V&V* campaign. Well, this comic book is the next best thing.

Keep up the good (make that great) work!

Douglas Fivecoat
1320 W. Kimberly #230
Tucson, AZ 85704

It was Jeff's brother who initially decided that the fictional "Center City" of the original adventure was actually Indianapolis, Indiana. Last summer a friend of mine and I went tooling around there so I could get a feel for the place, and I had a great time. Also, I called people I knew there and double-checked to make sure I didn't accidentally put the Pacific Ocean next to it or something. I thought the idea of super heroes running around Indianapolis was far more interesting than having them in New York just like all the others.

Dear Reality Checkers,

I first got *V&V* on July 15, 1985, although I had previously played *V&V* with my friends. I will always remember that day because *V&V* is my all-time favorite role-playing game, and I've played many. It was on that same fateful day that Guardian II (alias Curtis Bond) was created. Guardian II is currently 5th level and I have been playing him and only him since I first generated him. I have been waiting for **V&V#1** since I heard it was coming out. After hearing about the distribution problems for a month *[Actually deadline problems—Jack]* I finally got it. It was well worth the wait. Jeff Dee is my favorite artist and I especially enjoyed his *Progeny* characters. I do have some questions about the comic, though.

1) How come Laserfire is still in high school at age 21?

2) Does his girlfriend know he's Laserfire? (He had his costume carelessly concealed beneath his trenchcoat.)

3) Are the Crusaders not informed about all the powers of the Crushers? (Dreamweaver didn't know about Mace's heightened sniffer.)

4) Is the name Shatterman or Shadowman? Eclipse Extra and On The Racks both say Shadowman. Is he the same character advertised under the name Jack Dunn in the **V&V** ads?

5) Guardian II made the reality check roll. Does this mean that Dreamweaver can't fool him?

You've got my vote for **V&V** as a regular title, but only if Jeff Dee at least does the pencils. Well, hope you are auspicous in your vigilance!

Curtis Tom
6945 Lexington Lane
Niles, IL 60648

1) For some unknown reason, Laserfire is still only 17 years old. What's even stranger is the fact that none of the Crusaders or even Laserfire himself notice this. To date there has been no explanation for this strange phenomenon…

2) Yes, she does. Laserfire was late picking her up for the movie and didn't have time to change. But little did he know he was walking into a Crusher trap…

3) No, they aren't. Despite the fact that this conflict has been going on for years, everybody still hasn't fought everyone else yet. Also, a lot of super-powers aren't readily apparent unless the person having them advertises them. Since none of the Crushers want to do that (thus giving up some potential surprise or advantage), they still hold a few tricks up their sleeves…

4) Shatterman is Shatterman alias Dennis Machek. The Eclipse name snafu must've been due to some communications breakdown somewhere. As for Jack Dunn, he is an imposter!

5) Maybe, but then Dreamweaver is sneaky enough that you can never quite be sure…

By the way, Curtis, thanks for the background on Guardian II and his teammates!

Dear Jack, Jeff and the Whole Crew,

Thank you for finally producing a comic book based on the *V&V* role-playing game. This was definitely a "kick-ass" comic, as you put it. Jack and Jeff, the story is great. I always wondered how the Crushers captured the Crusaders, and now my mind is at ease. I can't wait to see what happens to Laserfire or what the Hauntress can do.

I have also read the character profile on Manstar and can't wait to see him in action.

The only disappointing part of the comic is that FIST is gone. He and Mace were my favorite Crushers and I always thought that if the two of them ever combined efforts they would cause havoc!! Hopefully, Manstar will be an appropriate replacement.

Jeff, your artwork was great, as usual. The picture of Evergreen on page 3, frame 3 and the picture of Mace in the illusionary sphere were awesome. Keep up the good work.

All in all this was a great comic, and I hope it will become a regular series.

Paul Szubielski
no address given

Well, Manstar and Mace didn't really get to combine forces in this story, but I hope that enough havoc was caused to make it enjoyable for you anyway…

Dear Jeff and Jack,

I gave up buying comics several years ago. However, I bought the first **Elementals** because I recognized the Destroyers' and Bill's name. Last week I came across **V&V** number one. I always read the introduction page first and so I wasn't sure about the phrase "soap-operatic psychobabble."

However, I would like to beg forgiveness for my misgivings. When you said you wanted a "kick-ass" book, you meant it. I saw the **Champions** series from your same publisher, and gave up after the second issue. The book was the culmination of a story that the creators of **Champions** have been playing. I didn't feel involved in the characters and hated their "nebulous pondering." I am glad to see some plain old action. "Hit him, THEN worry about your hangnail."

Your series, especially starting with "CACC," invites the reader inside. I enjoyed your presentation of the two novices, especially on the road in the U-Haul. I empathized with Shatterman on the last page from similar experience.

I have two questions and some miscellaneous comments: Did you know that your "on the rack" section on the inside front cover says "Shadowman"? Read the **V&V** listing. *(Yes. -Jack.)*

Secondly, are you going to give us Shatterman's, Condor's, and Hauntress' stats in later issues? *(Hopefully, by now you should have seen issues 2 and 3. -Jack.)* I am interested in seeing if Hauntress can do more than cast illusions. Temper is a lot cuter here than in our campaign, but I like that better. He's like a kid who doesn't know what else to do with himself. The posture on page 18, panel 5 was perfect. Please do something about giving Stormlord a proper accent. The occasional britishism thrown in wasn't very convincing. Nice illusions in the Dreamweaver sequence. I like the Enterprise the best, I think. For gosh sakes, is Mocker's face a "smiley face" with the eyes covered, or just a dopey eye? I never have been able to get that one.

I trust that the later issues will continue the straight-forward approach and the quality touches. I look forward to seeing more interesting items like Bull's face in the hall monitor on page 21, panel 2. If you have other responses like mine, show them to your boss; your audition so far is a wonderful success. Keep up the good work. You'll have to excuse me now. I can see a Church of Divine Harmony "welcome wagon" coming up my walk, and I don't have my boots or mask on yet.

John Ward (a.k.a. BlackJack)
P.O. Box 12651
Slo, Ca 93406

Thanks for writing, John. I promise to brush up on my British accents…

*Looks like we're just about out of room, so thanks again for following this series. I hope you all enjoyed it very much. Keep your eyes open for any further news on a possible regular **V&V** comic book. I've got my fingers crossed. In the meantime, if you're interested, why not write to Fantasy Games Unlimited and ask for a catalog which should include any new **V&V** material that has come out since I've written this. Their new address is 525 S. Hayden, Suite E, Tempe, AZ 85281. I'd like to dedicate this issue to Eric, Dave, Chris, Danny, Chris, Frank, Chuck (wherever you are), Willingham, Stan, Jill, Mark, Frances, Karen, Vokes and Rankin, Mom and Dad, the Grandfolks and everybody else I just forgot to mention.*

Jeff dedicates this issue to his lovely wife, Amanda.

"Mister Eraser Theme (I Am Mister Eraser)" (c) 1986 Bill Willingham. Used without permission.

The writer of this comic book would like to thank the makers of Jolt Cola, without which the completion of this comic book would have been impossible. So if you want to send me any for free, you can contact me through the publishers. Adios, Amoebas!

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